



THE

KNIGHT



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LITHUANIAN VOLUNTEER NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCE 15th ANNIVERSARY MEDAL

By Henry L. Gaidis

One of the first acts after the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania was the creation of a National Defense Department (Krašto Apsaugos Departmentas) as a safeguard from foreign intervention. On May 31, 1990, the National Defense Department began recruiting volunteers. By June, recruitment had progressed sufficiently to allow the establishment of seven military defense zones. On August 21, 1990, the National Defense Department further expanded with the establishment of the Security or Police Service (Apsaugos tarnyba) and on September 10, 1990, the Border Protection Service Division (Pasienio apsaugos tarnybos skyrius).

In January 1991, the Soviet Union attempted to suppress Lithuanian freedom and began seizing strategic locations across the country. It was during these critical days that the Lithuanian people formed a human wall to surround the Supreme Council Building, the Media House, and the radio and television facilities. On 11 January 1991 several hundreds volunteers took an oath to defend the Republic of Lithuania and began preparing for an attack on the Lithuanian parliament building as well as important communication facilities.

On January 17, 1991, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania official formed these volunteers (Savanoriai) into the National Defense Volunteer Service (Savanoriškoji Krašto Apsaugos Tarnyba - SKAT). 200 company size units were formed and assigned to eight territorial defense regions. Colonel Jonas Gečas was appointed Chief of Staff and took command of the defense of the nation. During the 1991 attempted Soviet coup of the re-established Lithuanian Government, SKAT volunteer Artūras Sakalauskas lost his life in the line of duty while defending the Lithuanian Supreme Council building. With the repulsing this last feeble Soviet attempted coup, the Republic of Lithuania was firmly established. These soldiers continued on active duty until a full-time Lithuanian military was established and all Soviet forces were withdrawn from the country. Since that time, these volunteer soldiers



MEDAL OBVERSE



MEDAL REVERSE

Continued on page 2...

LITHUANIAN VOLUNTEER NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCE 15th ANNIVERSARY MEDAL

(Continued from page 1...)

have continued to protect the nation like the American National Guard in providing assistance to civilian authorities during natural or industrial disasters and are available for immediate support to the military in emergency situations. SKAT quickly proved its military worthiness to Lithuania by fighting forest fires, participating in cleaning hazardous spill, accidental ecological disasters, and flood rescue. In 1993, the volunteers were proud to provide security and maintain order during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Lithuania. These proud volunteers continue to prepare for the military defense of the nation and regularly taken part in Lithuanian, joint American and European military exercises.

In 1998 the Voluntary National Defense Service (SKAT) was reorganized as the National Defense Volunteer Forces (Krašto Apsaugos Savanorių Pajėgas - KASP) and became an integral part of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Now this volunteer force officially functions as the reserve component of the Lithuanian Army with its members going through basic training and continued military training on a periodic basis. There is no question that the Lithuanian volunteer defense force contributed greatly the strength of Lithuania's military, thus enhancing its acceptance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In 2006, on its 15th Anniversary, the Lithuanian Volunteer Defense Force proudly issued a commemorative table medal and corresponding challenge coin. The table medal is bronze and 2 3/8 inch in diameter. The obverse features the unit's insignia: Pillar of Gediminas over two cross swords resting upon a four oak leaf cross, surrounded by the legend "Krašto Apsaugos Savanorių Pajėgos" translated into English as the "National Defence Volunteer Forces". The reverse features the unit's original insignia: Pillar of Gediminas resting upon a tri-color 1918 Lithuanian volunteer's shoulder patch, above two crosses swords, resting on a three cornered cross. Around the insignia is the unit's original designation "Savanoriškoji Krašto Apsaugos Tarnyba" and it's founding date "1991 Sausio 17" - January 17, 1991.

Though specific details on the smaller 1 3/4 inch diameter bronze challenge coin are unknown, it was issued around the same time as the table medal. Challenge coins are given out by civilian governments and military commanders for a job well done and/or as souvenirs to visiting VIPs. One version has it that the name is "challenge" because a commander presents the coin for a job or a challenge well done. Another version is that it comes from the common military drinking practice whereby, when in a bar, anyone at the table can voice a challenge to have you show your coin. The one at the table without the coin pays for the round, but if all have the coin, the challenger pays for the round. Who do you believe is telling the truth when it comes to the origin of the word "challenge".



OBVERSE



REVERSE

The challenge coin features the unit's current insignia on both sides, with the legend "Krašto Apsaugos Savanorių Pajėgos" in Lithuanian on the obverse and "National Defence Volunteer Forces" in English on the reverse. Although these are Lithuanian medals, they are frequently given out to fellow NATO members.

The author's challenge coin came in a plastic case, leading to the assumption that both the commemorative table medal and the challenge coin were made by the Lithuanian Mint.

LITHUANIAN HISTORY REFLECTED IN ITS CURRENCIES ^{3.}

Žilvinė Petrauskaitė, Kaunas's Day, February 17, 2006, p. 5. Translated by Aleksandras Radžius

The exhibit "From litas's history" will probably be the last for the Lithuanian currency. The exhibit which opened Wednesday in the Historic Presidential Residence bears witness to the official and the unofficial history of the litas.

Money does not take up much room. Thus, exhibiting them took up only one hall of the Historic Presidential Residence. However, currencies of various denominations spoke of, and bore witness to, the history of Lithuanian politics, economics and culture.



Numismatist Stanislovas Sajauskas viewing the "From the history of the litas" exhibit.

"The national currency was very instrumental in popularizing our culture," said numismatist Stanislovas Sajauskas. "By depicting Lithuanian rulers, national symbols and the greatest national and cultural leaders on the currencies, the most important aspects of Lithuanian history were brought to the fore".

The exhibit was part of the official commemoration of February 16. The most interesting items of the exhibit were banknotes and coins which were produced but never placed into circulation.

On exhibit were 1919 sketches by Antanas Zmuidžinavičius of 2 muštiniai banknotes. However, it was not the 'muštinis' or 'auksinas', but the 'litas' that became the currency of Lithuania in 1922. Naming the currency 'litas' was the brainchild of Vaclovas Vaidotas, Secretary of the Economic Commission of the Lithuanian Parliament. The 1938 10 litai banknotes of Adomas Galdikas never saw the light of day either. On this notes, across the top and above the heads of the Lithuanian Council are the arms of Kaunas, Vilnius and Klaipėda. Since the Klaipėda Territory had been torn from Lithuania, these notes were not issued.



The 1938 10 litai note designed by Adomas Galdikas was never placed in circulation.

Contemporary 500 and 1,000 litai banknotes have also become strictly a collectors item. S. Sajauskas says that it was unofficially decided that the largest denomination banknotes should not be larger than the minimum wage. When the time came to issue the 500 litai notes, it was determined that the safeguards against counterfeiting were not adequate and that new notes would have to be printed. The 1,000 notes have on one side the portrait of M. K. Čiurlionis and on the other, a fragment from the artists work "The Tale of Kings". The introduction of the euro stands in the way of placing this note in circulation as the minimum wage will not reach the appropriate level by then.



**LIETUVOS BANKAS
BANK OF LITHUANIA
CASH DEPARTMENT**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**ON DECLARING LEGAL TENDER AND THE ISSUE OF THE 50 LITAS COMMEMORATIVE
COIN MARKING THE UPRISING OF 1831 AND THE 200TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF
EMILIJA PLIATERYTE, A HERO OF THE UPRISING**

1 September 2006 No. 10.48.-1002-1704

Vilnius

We hereby inform you that, on the decision of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania, a new 50 litas commemorative coin of the Republic of Lithuania marking the Uprising of 1831 and the 200th Birth Anniversary of Emilija Pliateryte, a Hero of the Uprising will be launched on 12 September 2006.

The 50 litas coin is made of silver (Ag 925), quality proof, diameter 38.61 mm, weight 28.28 g. The coin has a mirror surface with mat relief. The mintage of the coin is 2,500 pieces.

The obverse of the coin bears the state emblem *Vytis* in a shield. A fragment of the uprising is incorporated in the background of the state emblem. The obverse is surrounded by the inscriptions LIETUVA and 50 LITŲ. The logo of UAB Lithuanian Mint is incorporated on the left of the state emblem and the year 2006 on the right.

A portrait of Emilija Pliateryte, a hero of the uprising, is shown on the reverse of the coin with the years 1806-1831 on the left of the portrait. At the top, the inscription EMILIJA PLIATERYTĖ is arranged in a semi-circle.

The edge of the coin bears the inscription 1831 * SUKILIMAS (1831*UPRISING).

The coin was designed by Giedrius Paulauskis.

The coins were minted at the Lithuanian Mint.

The price of the 50 litas coin is LTL 110 (EUR 31.86) (in a display box) and LTL 90 (EUR 26.07) (without a box), including VAT.

Please find attached the illustrations of the coin.

For further information please see the website of the Bank of Lithuania at www.lb.lt.

Enclosed please also find leaflets with the descriptions of the coin in a separate envelope.

Yours faithfully,

/signed/

Bronislovas Degutis
Deputy Director
Head of Currency Production Division

Contact person: Audronė Gruodytė, tel.: +370 5 2680 316, fax: +370 5 2680 314.



OBVERSE



REVERSE

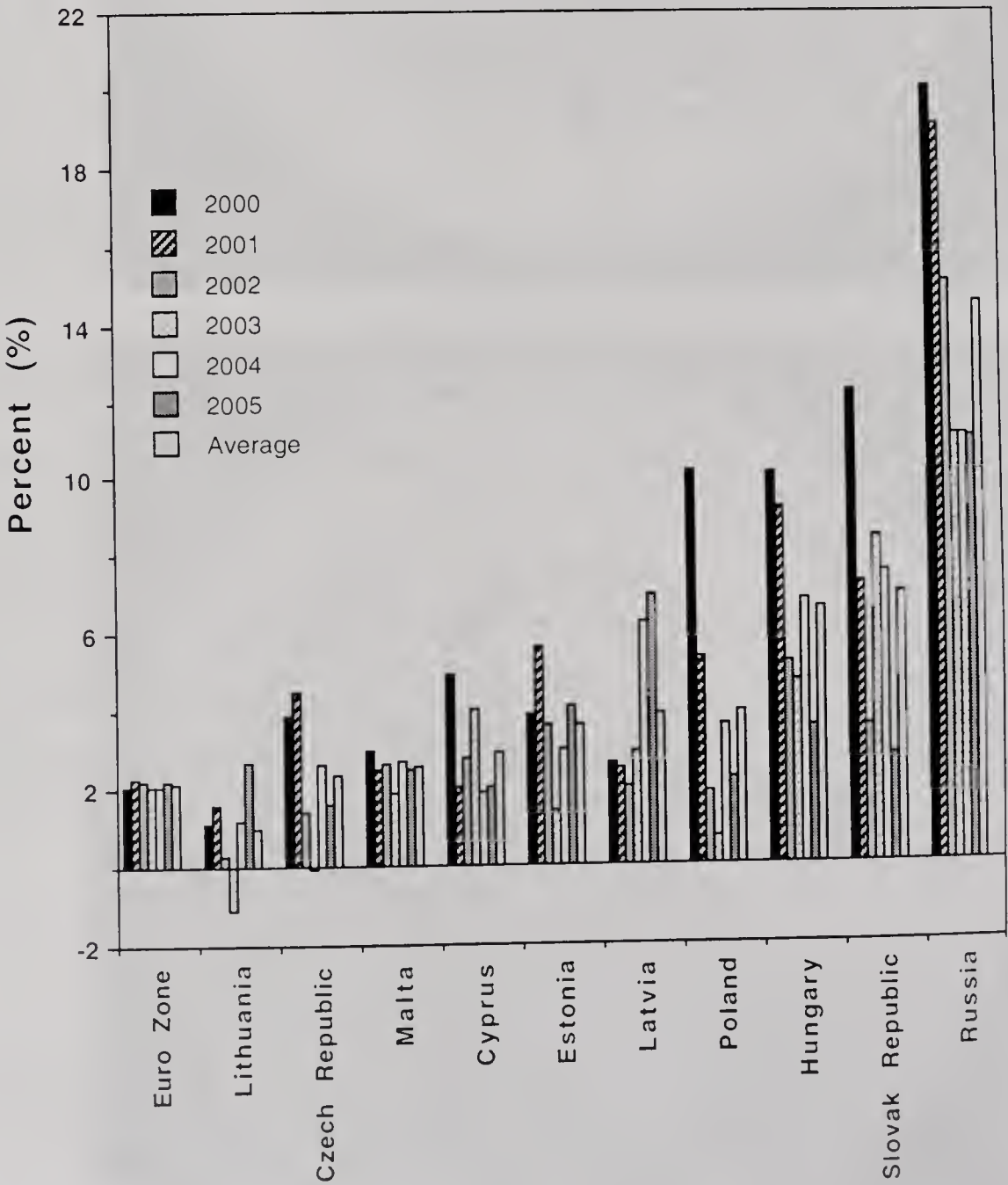
6. Lithuanian inflation and the euro

Since the European Commission declared on May 16 that Lithuania's inflation rate of 2.7% too high to allow Lithuania to adopt the euro as of January 1, 2007, let's look at the inflation track records from 2000 to 2005 of other countries not currently in the euro zone as well as the mean inflation rates of Western European countries using the euro currency now.

Based on these data^{1,2}, it seems that Lithuania exhibits the greatest degree of fiscal responsibility compared to countries not already in the euro zone. But, the sharp rise of inflation from 2003 to 2005 is troubling. It would be valuable to have comparable data from all the countries already in the euro zone for comparison.

Aleksandras Radžius

| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | average |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| Euro Zone (mean) | 2.1 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.17 |
| Lithuania | 1.1 | 1.6 | 0.3 | -1.1 | 1.2 | 2.7 | 0.97 |
| Czech Republic | 3.9 | 4.5 | 1.4 | -0.1 | 2.6 | 1.6 | 2.32 |
| Malta | 3.0 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.53 |
| Cyprus | 4.9 | 2.0 | 2.8 | 4.0 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.93 |
| Estonia | 3.9 | 5.6 | 3.6 | 1.4 | 3.0 | 4.1 | 3.60 |
| Latvia | 2.6 | 2.5 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 6.2 | 6.9 | 3.85 |
| Poland | 10.1 | 5.3 | 1.9 | 0.7 | 3.6 | 2.2 | 3.97 |
| Hungary | 10.0 | 9.1 | 5.2 | 4.7 | 6.8 | 3.5 | 6.55 |
| Slovak Republic | 12.2 | 7.2 | 3.5 | 8.4 | 7.5 | 2.8 | 6.93 |
| Russia | 20.0 | 19.0 | 15.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 10.9 | 14.48 |



References

1. Morten Hansen and Alf Vanags. *Inflation in the Baltic States and Other EU New Member States: Similarities, Differences and Adoption of the Euro*. Paper presented at the Association of the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) 20th conference on Baltic Studies, June 15-17, 2006, Washington D.C.

2. David J. Lynch. *Russia brings revitalized economy to the table*. USA Today, July 13, 2006, pp. 1B,2B.

Lithuanian vs. Latvian inflation and the euro

Aleksandras Radžius

An article in the August 28, 2006 issue of *Coin World*, p. 70 should be of interest to us. The article discusses and illustrates the designs of the Latvian euro, and ends with the statement **"... once the EU approves Latvia's coinage, which is expected sometime between now and September 2007."**

Since Lithuania was rejected because of a marginally "high" inflation rate and with Latvian inflation rates being consistently and substantially higher than the Lithuanian or Estonian rates starting with 2003, we should be following closely to see what "logic" the EU will be forwarding in 2007 regarding Lithuania vis-a-vis Latvian and Estonia rates and each country's entry into the euro zone.



National side of
one euro coins.



National side of
two euro coins.

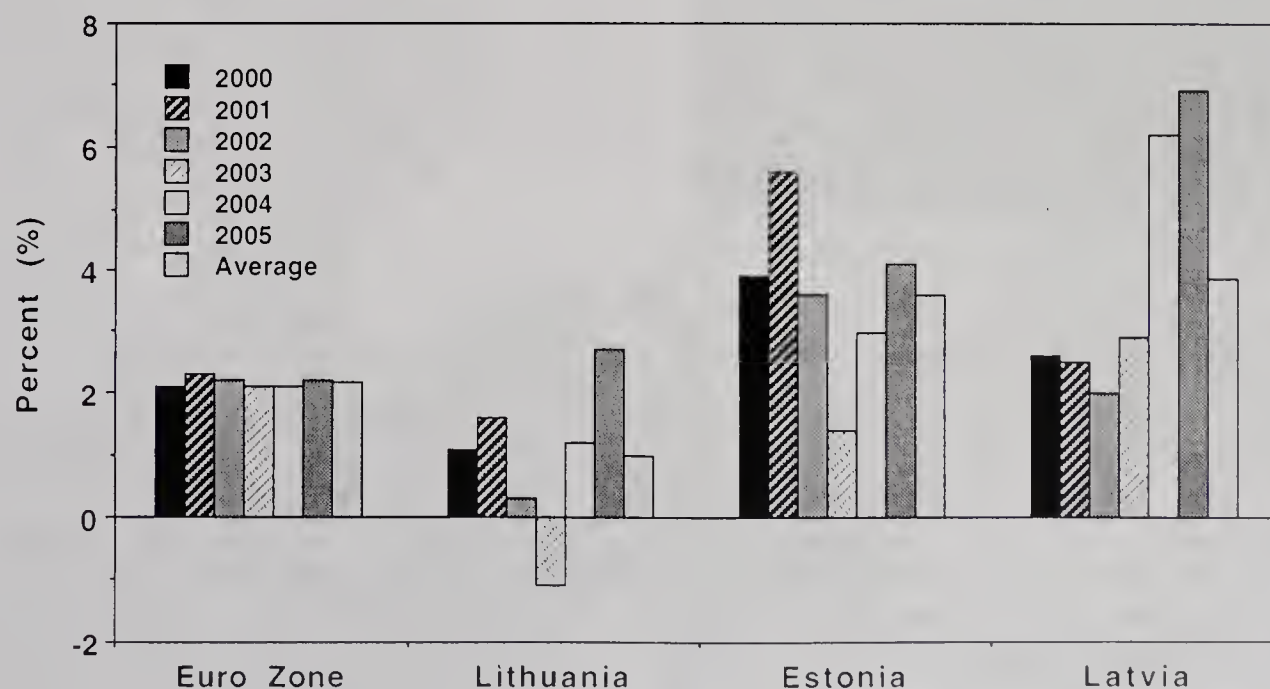


National side of
1-, 2- and 5-cent
euro coins.



National side of
10-, 20- and 50-
cent euro coins.

| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | average |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| Euro Zone (mean) | 2.1 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.17 |
| Lithuania | 1.1 | 1.6 | 0.3 | -1.1 | 1.2 | 2.7 | 0.97 |
| Estonia | 3.9 | 5.6 | 3.6 | 1.4 | 3.0 | 4.1 | 3.60 |
| Latvia | 2.6 | 2.5 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 6.2 | 6.9 | 3.85 |



8. No Flowers for Smetona. Crypt in Ohio Holds Remains of Famed Lithuanian President.

BY FRANK PASSIC

There are no flowers at his crypt, although the Mausoleum is filled with them on the vaults of others nearby. He was the President, yet you would not know that by reading the simple inscription found upon his plain faceplate.

His image was on a coin, a banknote, and on stamps. Yet he has been forgotten here in a Mausoleum tucked away in a Catholic Cemetery east of Cleveland, Ohio.

He has already been moved once since his death, from Knollwood Cemetery Mausoleum in Cleveland to this one, in 1975. But his remains haven't been taken back to Lithuania since independence was restored, like those of his counterpart were, President Kazys Grinius. So his remains lay here far, far away from the country he loved and served.

He was Antanas Smetona (1874-1944), the first and fourth President of the Republic of Lithuania. Smetona is interred in the Crucifixion Mausoleum in All Souls Cemetery, located at 10366 (office at 10400) Chardon Road, Chardon Township (Geauga County), Ohio. 44024. (440) 286-7151. The Mausoleum is located in Section 23, and Smetona's crypt is No. 103. His wife Sofija (1885-1968) is interred next to him on the right.

Recently LNA member Lou Merkys of Ohio visited the resting place of Smetona for us and took photographs which we are sharing with you along with this new information. Lou has mastered his "pocket" GPS locating program, and, for the record, here is the GPS location of the Mausoleum where Smetona is interred. It is: North 41 degrees, 35 minutes, 600 seconds by West 081 degrees, 16 minutes, 208 seconds.

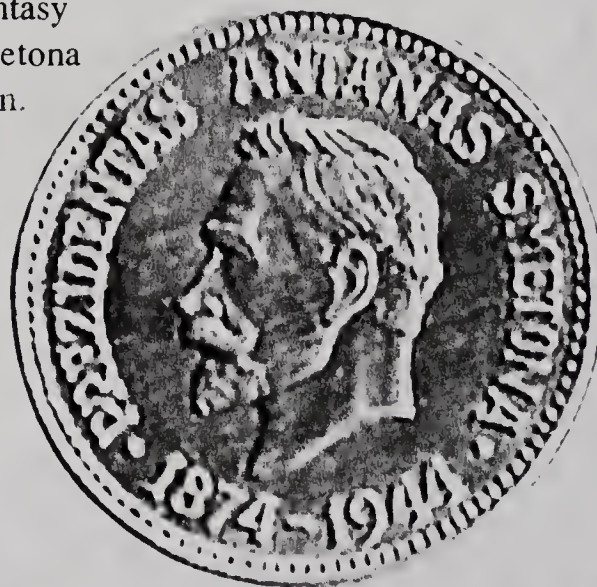
Presented here are some photographs taken by Lou Merkys. If you would better copies of any of these photographs, just e-mail this editor and I can send them to you as attachments. Albionfp@hotmail.com.

RIGHT: Flowers line the faceplates of many vaults in the Crucifixion Mausoleum in All Souls Cemetery in Chardon Township, Ohio., but not that of Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona and his wife Sofija. Cemetery photos by Lou Merkys.



The "no flowers left here" faceplate of the crypt of President Antanas Smetona. Crypt-103.

Fantasy
Smetona
coin.





The Crucifixion Mausoleum in All Souls Cemetery, where President Antanas Smetona is interred.



CENTER: Left: Faceplate of Sofija Smetona (1885-1968). Right: Section 23 marker.



Entrance to All Souls Cemetery.

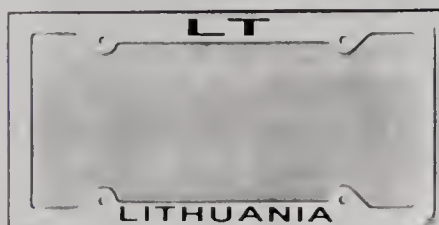
BRENNER ARTICLE IN COINS MAGAZINE

There is a two page article entitled "Victor David Brenner: From Lithuania to Lincoln" in the current issue of Coins magazine.

LNA MEETING

Tony Tomonis led our LNA meeting at the ANA Convention in Denver in August. There were only a few persons who attended, as attendance was down this year at the overall Convention. Tony exhibited his collection of Pre-World War II Estonian Fireman Decorations at the Convention, and won a first place award in the decorations classification.

FOR SALE



Lithuanian Automobile Plates
Frame \$4.50 #370



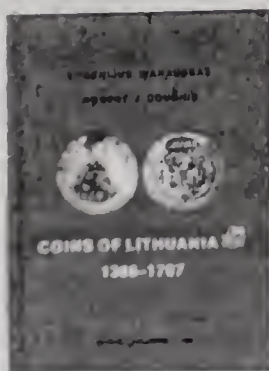
Lithuanian Automobile Plates
\$5.50 #361



Automobile Bumper Sticker
1 1/2" x 3" \$3.50 #438



Window Sticker
Stylized Coat of
Arms of Lithuania:
white Vytis in red
background. 2.5" x
3". \$1 #469



\$57.50 #114

Coins of
Lithuania
1386-1707.
By Eugenijus
Ivanauskas
and Robert J.
Douchis.
Published by
Savastis,
Vilnius-
Columbia, 1999
In English. 271
pages

**Balzekas Museum
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(773) 582-6500.

"FIND A NUMISMATIC GRAVE" ARTICLE APPEARS IN THE NUMISMATIST.

A major article entitled "Find a Numismatic Grave" is printed in the October, 2006 issue of THE NUMISMATIST, the official publication of the American Numismatic Association. Authored by Frank Passic, Numismatic Curator at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, and co-founder of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association and Editor of The Knight, this 8-page article (pages 2 through 9) focuses on numismatic burials posted on the www.findagrave.com website.

Included as examples are the burial places of Lithuanian numismatist Dr. Aleksandras M. Rackus (1893-1965) who was a member of the ANA; Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona (1874-1944) whose image appears on a Lithuanian coin and banknote; and born-in-Lithuania Victor David Brenner (1871-1924), the designer of the U.S. Lincoln Cent.

The Smetona mention includes a young photo of this prolific leader of the early 20th century. It also includes a color photograph of the rare 1938 10 litu banknote, as well as the popular 1938 coin bearing the image of Smetona. The tombstones of Brenner and Rackus are also illustrated, along with their photographs.

This October issue is available for \$5.00 from the ANA. We suggest that our readers obtain a copy for their Lithuanian numismatic library. To order, give them a call at: 1-800-514-2646. Or e-mail them at: ana@money.org. Their mailing address: ANA, 818 N. Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

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